

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SEOUL 02685 130214Z

71

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6539

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR KS

SUBJECT: ROK REACTION TO THAI ELECTIONS

REF: SEOUL 2277

1. ROK PRESS AND ROKG OFFICIALS WITH WHOM WE HAVE DISCUSSED SUBJECT HAVE CAUTIOUSLY WELCOMED VICTORY IN THAI ELECTIONS OF WHAT PRESS DESCRIBES AS "RIGHT OF CENTER DEMOCRATIC PARTY". EDITORIALS APPEARING SO FAR IN THE LEADING INDEPENDENT TONGA ILBO, THE SEMI-OFFICIAL KYONGHYANG SINMUN AND THE PROVINCIAL MEIL SINMUN HAVE EXPRESSED VIRTUALLY THE SAME SENTIMENT, WELCOMING VICTORY OF THE CONSERVATIVE POLITICIANS AND EXPRESSING CONCERN ABOUT REPORTS OF INCREASED COMMUNIST ACTIVITY IN NORTHERN THAILAND SUPPORTED BY THE VIETNAMESE AND CONTINUING NATIONAL STUDENT CENTER OPPOSITION TO U.S. TROOPS IN THAILAND. THE KYONGHYANG SINMUN SAID IT HOPED FOR THE ACHIEVEMENT OF POLITICAL STABILITY BY THE SENI PRAMOJ GOVERNMENT AND SAID THAT THE POLITICAL SITUATION NOW FACING THAILAND IS ESSENTIALLY LINKED TO ORDEALS CONFRONTING WESTERN-STYLE DEMOCRACY. MEIL
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PAGE 02 SEOUL 02685 130214Z

SINMUN ANTICIPATED THAT THE NEW THAI GOVERNMENT WOULD PUT AN

END TO THE KUKRIT POLICY OF STAYING AWAY FROM THE U.S. AND PURSUING NEUTRALITY. TONGA ILBO CHARACTERIZED KUKRIT PRAMOJ AND THE "SOCIALIST FORCES" DEFEAT AS A "CLEAR-CUT RESULT OF THE GROWING CONCERN AMONG THE THAI ELECTORATE ABOUT THE DANGER FROM COMMUNIST GUERILLAS AND THE LEFTIST INSISTANCE ON THE WITHDRAWAL OF U.S. FORCES FROM THAILAND. THE PAPER WELCOMED SENI'S REMARKS CONCERNING U.S. FORCE WITHDRAWAL AS INDICATING THAT THE CURRENT AGREEMENT FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE FORCES MIGHT BE RENEGOTIATED.

2. ROKG OFFICIALS WITH WHOM WE HAVE DISCUSSED THE THAI ELECTION RESULTS HAVE EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THE SENI VICTORY MIGHT PRESAGE A SHIFT IN THAI POLICY FAVORING THE RETENTION OF U.S. FORCES AND STRONGER OPPOSITION TO THE VIETNAMESE COMMUNISTS BOTH BILATERALLY AND WITHIN ASEAN.

COMMENT: BECAUSE OF THE HIGH DEGREE OF OFFICIAL ROKG INTEREST IN DEVELOPMENTS WHICH AFFECT THE ONLY U.S. FORCES REMAINING ON THE CONTINENT OF ASIA OUTSIDE THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA, WOULD APPRECIATE RECEIVING ANY SUMMARY REPORTS OF MEANING OF THAI ELECTIONS WHICH DEPARTMENT OR EMBASSY BANGKOK FEEL MIGHT BE USED TO GIVE ROKS A BETTER APPRECIATION OF THAI REALITIES.
SNEIDER

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